The European Industry highlights the essential role of biomass in strengthening the EU Economy

December 03, 2014 – Today the European Biomass Association held a high-level event titled “Sustainable Biomass Backs European Economy” in Brussels. Top EU companies gathered to highlight the benefits the bioenergy sector offers in reaching the EU’s energy security, affordability and sustainability objectives.

While the EU’s current dependence on energy imports comes at a significant cost (€545 billion in 2012), “biomass offers an available and affordable solution to reduce EU fossil fuel imports and reduce the European energy bills” said Håkan Grefberg, Senior Adviser in the Heat Division of energy company Fortum. To give an example: in 2013, pellets used in individual heating appliances in Europe allowed savings of close to 1.9 Billion euro for households when compared with what would have been the case had heating oil been used instead.

Biomass can also contribute to the strengthening of EU industrial competitiveness. Niklas Nillroth, Vice President of Environmental Management at Volvo Construction Equipment said that “Energy costs are key for industrial competitiveness. Thanks to the replacement of fossil fuels with biomass in some of Volvo’s production sites, we are making these sites more competitive.”

In addition to being a local and affordable source of energy, biomass also drives investments and innovation, which is evidenced by boiler manufacturer KWB, for example, who have constantly improved the energy efficiency rate of their pellet boilers to reach a level up to 96%, says Andreas Lingner CEO of KWB Germany.

Last but not least, biomass has a key role to play in fostering economic growth in rural areas and improving sustainable forest management in Europe. Cécile Goube, Secretary General of Alliance Forêts Bois, France’s biggest forest cooperative, said “The wood energy market has allowed forest owners to carry out management operations that could be technically and economically impossible in the past. This contributes to more wood production for all uses, without forgetting jobs creation”.

This high-level event also saw the European Biomass Association launch a new campaign called “Biomass Counts” (www.biomasscounts.eu), an initiative that seeks to explain the reasons why sustainable biomass counts in the EU policy landscape. This campaign will be an opportunity for the bioenergy industry to continue to provide concrete and reliable information on the contribution of the biomass sector to a strong and competitive low carbon economy.